

settle me by tenderlogic

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Gen

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Jonathan Byers & Steve Harrington & Nancy Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Past Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler - Relationship

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-08-25

Updated: 2018-08-25

Packaged: 2022-04-23 02:29:46

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 685

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

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settle me

Steve's got a plan that plays over and over on in the back of his head like a VHS tape that rewinds as soon as it reaches its end. It's a stupid plan and it goes something like *if that **thing** attacks him again, this time he's going to be prepared because he's got a goddamn bat this time*. And yeah, it's stupid, yeah, it's really weak, but he still carries his plan with him in the back of his car wherever he goes because you never know. He didn't know when he went to apologise and out of the blue, this *monster* from the walls was coming to *kill* him. He almost died.

He almost *died*.

And holy shit, that scares him more than it should. It's imprinted somewhere on his mind next to kissing Nancy and then watching her scream in terror as she fights, fights for her life and Jonathan's life and Steve's. At night he plays both, over and over; he's kissing her, thumbs looping into the waistband of her pants. Her lips are cool and their faces are flushed.

Then they're screaming and running and Steve's legs hurt and he's tired but he's not gonna let them die, no no no no- not before he can apologize, fall to his knees and tell them how much he's messed up and how sorry he is for his shitty behavior.

He feels like he's constantly toeing that line between just remembering it and being completely traumatized by it. He feels like he's constantly stumbling into the latter when it gets too loud and he's running to his car and unlocking his trunk before he can even blink.

Steve fears he's turned into a huge damn baby but... but. What else is there to do? How do you forget that? How do you move past it? How do your muscles ease after that? How do you relax?

How do you breathe?

Steve's on eggshells, constantly- always prepared for some form of danger to rip apart his momentary moment of *it's all okay*. He feels like an overly stressed goddamn... mother or something, watching

these stupid shits run into death time after time and Steve's half useless through it all. Because if he runs the math (and well, he's admittedly kind of shit with math), the chances of him winning whatever this is versus the monsters winning is slim to none.

But he pretends everything's fine; he's cool and chill and totally not freaking out at all even though his insides are this big mess of anxious nerves that never ever settle down.

So he's at Jonathan's house sometime after school and he doesn't remember how he got there, just that he needed, for some godforsaken reason, to be there. Nancy's there (because of *course* she's there these days and he finds he doesn't quite mind), and she guides him in and he's babbling apologies and he's kind of maybe trembling a little. Jonathan asks him what he's doing there and Steve finds he doesn't even have an answer.

Somewhere along the line he's telling them about his plan and they're sharing a smirk between each other, like there's some inside joke there and there probably is. Then Nancy talks about the box of weapons they had in a cardboard box and soon enough they're talking about the Upside Down and the Demogorgons like it's commonplace.

Then Steve's leaning against the back of the couch between Jonathan and Nancy and Nancy's kind of brushing his hair with her fingers. Jonathan just stares at him like he doesn't quite know what to do about him, like he's not sure if he can trust him or not. That's fair. Steve doesn't know what to do or how to feel about Jonathan either—just that somewhere along the line, he's stopped hating him and somehow wants to be in his world in some way, somehow. But then, eventually, Jonathan's hand drops on his shoulder and he rises to put on some music.

In that moment Steve closes his eyes and, finally, for a moment, he can breathe.

Author's Note:

First work in this fandom lolllll. I love Steve and I love Jonathan and I love Nancy and I hope I did

them justice. :) I just want everyone to be okay.